

Our Lady's Catholic High School

A Mathematics and Computing Specialist School

February 2010



Moodling at Our Lady's



Moodle? What's all that about?

Since Spring 2008 all schools have had to offer some form of personalised learning via "Virtual Learning Environment", a secure online space where students and teachers can communicate and work together. While there are several highly priced commercial VLE's around, by far the most popular choice in secondary schools is a free (Open Source) option called Moodle. Our Lady's began using Moodle in 2006 and it was an instant hit amongst staff and pupils, allowing them to discuss in fo-

runs, send in work to be marked online in assignments and check learning with self marking exercises. By summer 2007 Our Lady's was leading the field in Moodle use and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust designated us Lead School in the North for VLE development. We have featured in the Times Educational Supplement and been filmed for Teachers' TV. Moodle has transformed our school community, bringing together teachers, students, parents, parishes and local residents. Lady's. Assistant Headteacher and

"Moodle—it's a way of life"

Director of Specialist School Mr Mark Greenwood is responsible for the implementation and development of Moodle. *Children join Year 7 already having used our Moodle in Years 5 and 6 he says. It's a way of life.* The following pages aim to give a flavour of Moodling at Our Lady's.

More than just a website

These days most schools have websites for announcing and showcasing events. Our Lady's is no exception and you can find us at <http://www.olchs.lancs.sch.uk>. However what's different about it is that rather than have a separate, corporate designed website with a link to a log-in only VLE, our VLE is our website. The front page of our Moodle is open to the world, providing general school information, resources for parents and multimedia accounts of school activities. Yet



with a couple of clicks, students and their teachers can login securely and access their subject courses to continue their work. Rather than having the distrac-

tion of two addresses on the internet, Our Lady's Moodle is a one-stop shop for reading up the latest in our school community and keeping up with homework. Mrs Mary Cooch keeps it up to date, adding new information almost every day and archiving all events. Georgia in Year 8 summed it up: *It's a bit like our classroom and our website all rolled into one!*

Instant Feedback



Ask your child what they like about Moodle: one thing they're bound to say is that for some tasks they don't have to wait for their teacher to do the marking to get results. Quizzes, gap-fill exercises and even games can all be marked by Moodle, saving teachers time and motivating students with instant feedback. *We know our score immediately says Andrew in Year 8, so we can keep trying again and again to get a higher grade.*

ICT excellence

The ICT department threw out their exercise books several years ago with the advent of Moodle—and put everything online. Now, in addition to learning the basics, students in their ICT lessons can create, upload and share flash animations, digital artwork and imaginative sound and video files.

Watch out for Mr Joe Bell's ICT Showcase page highlighting examples of these. In Y10 and Y11 students follow a KS4 ICT course (OCR Nationals) which is



Vector art-
ICT excellence on Moodle

delivered and moderated entirely on Moodle. *Tracking progress is much easier on Moodle and students really appreciate it* says Principal Teacher of ICT Alan O'Donohoe. *KS4 ICT results have risen significantly, reaching 96% in 2009.*

Moodle for SEAL



SEAL stands for Social Emotional Aspects of Learning and is an approach promoting positive behaviour and effective learning. Mrs Eve Howard has responsibility for SEAL and ensures the weekly SEAL learning outcomes are posted on the front page of Moodle. Students are encouraged to develop their social skills by contributing to forums and individual year pages. You only need look at our Past Events pages to see examples of positive behaviour and SEAL at work !

Teachers' TV stars



Last summer Head of Geography Adrian Gormally was approached by Teachers TV to be filmed for a demonstration "good practice"

lesson on using educational games within a Moodle VLE. A camera crew and interviewer spent a morning in July with Adrian and his Year 7 geography class playing, learning and collaborating on Moodle on the subject of Climate Change. As Adrian explained to the crew *The children like playing the games on*

Moodle because they enjoy the competitive element and it consolidates their learning. I like it because when they play for homework the scores are automatically recorded in Moodle.

Our Past Events page on Moodle has a link to the programme which you can access here:

<http://snurl.com/ufew>

OFSTED impressed

In 2007 Mr Mark Greenwood, Assistant Head and Director of Specialist School Status was told by OFSTED that our Moodle was "outstanding". The VLE was praised nine times in twelve pages as helping make "a positive contribution to the community". Its use with our family of



primaries (see overleaf) creates "excellent induction procedures, ensuring a smooth transition from

Year 6 to Year 7" while current pupils and their parents, the inspectors noted, benefit as "the VLE supports them well because they can access it readily and receive regular and quick feedback" Our OFSTED report can be viewed on the Parents' Page of Moodle.

Primaries go Moodling



Years 5 and Years 6 from our family of primaries get a taster both of life at High School and also of Moodling when they come to visit us on Special Days during the school year.

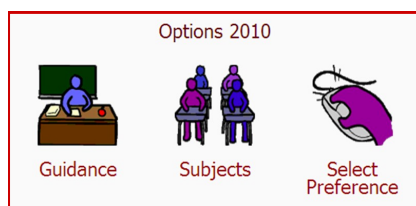
Year 5 spend a “fun educational hour” learning something new while at the same time enjoying games on our Moodle. On the February Maths and ICT Challenge Day, they visit again and begin an ICT Certificate course called Bronze INGOTS which they continue in Year 6, once more entirely on our Moodle. Mrs Mary Cooch who is responsible for KS2 ICT says: *The aim is to finish the course and be presented with the certificate as*

they enter Year 7—yet some are so keen they have already finished the tasks for the Bronze INGOTS course and are ready to receive their certificates from Mr Ranson later this month.



Options—the Moodle way

For the last two years, all Year 9s have selected their options directly in Moodle. They are enrolled on an Options course where they can view details about every subject available. Because the details are online, Principal Teachers are not limited to promoting their subject with plain text - they can include



sound, video and images. Deputy Headteacher Mr David Hubbard explains: *The system makes it easy for students and their*

parents to access options information together and make an informed decision. Once the students have made their selection (using a Moodle questionnaire) the responses can be downloaded to help me plan next year's timetable. In fact, it's saved me hours of work and of course it cuts down on paper too.

Spreading the Word

Since 2007, Our Lady's has been designated by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust as Lead School in the North for VLE development. We offer training to schools around the country on all aspects of implementing and using Moodle. Find out more from <http://snurl.com/ugqyp>



In 2009 Mr Mark Greenwood was appointed Lead Practitioner for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust to advise on ICT nationally and aid other schools in their implementation of a VLE.

